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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 WINDHOEK 000315

SENSITIVE  
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EEB/ESC BRAD BROOKS-RUBIN; AF/S PHAEDRA GWYN

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ETRD](#) [ECON](#) [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [ZI](#) [WA](#)  
SUBJECT: DEMARCHE DELIVERED: KP CHAIR EXPLAINS HIS ZIMBABWE  
TRIP

REF: A. STATE 91834  
[B](#). HARARE 263  
[C](#). WINDHOEK 85

Classified By: AMBASSADOR DENNISE MATHIEU for 1.4 (b) and (d).

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Summary  
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[1](#)1. (C) Ambassador Mathieu delivered demarche (reftel A) to Kimberley Process Chair Bernhard Esau September 2. Esau, who is also Namibia's Deputy Minister of Mines and Energy, characterized his mid August trip to Zimbabwe as a bilateral mission, not as an official KP Chair visit. The trip resulted in the Zimbabwean government's (GOZ) submission of an action plan to bring Zimbabwe into compliance with the KP, claimed Esau. The KP Chair acknowledged that he had not briefed KP members before his trip, but defended his impromptu visit stating that campaigning for upcoming national elections in Namibia would have precluded a later trip to Zimbabwe. Namibian Diamond Commissioner Kennedy Hamutenya, also in attendance, argued that alarming reports from Marange required the KP Chair's urgent action. Esau asserted that he never suggested nor publicly stated that the KP had chosen not to pursue suspension of Zimbabwe, despite press reports to the contrary. The KP Chair is optimistic his efforts will lead to a solution to the Zimbabwe problem at the upcoming KP Plenary Session, scheduled for November 2-6 in the coastal Namibian city of Swakopmund. End Summary

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Demarche Delivered  
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[1](#)2. (SBU) On September 2, Ambassador Mathieu delivered reftel A demarche to Namibia's Minister of Mines and Energy Bernhard Esau who currently serves as the Chair of the Kimberley Process. Namibian Diamond Commissioner Kennedy Hamutenya and KPSC Coordinator Cecile Mbundu also attended. Econoff served as note taker.

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A Bilateral Visit  
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[1](#)3. (C) Esau characterized his trip to Zimbabwe during the week of August 17 as a bilateral visit designed to capitalize on Namibia's special relationship with the Zimbabwean government (GOZ). The Ambassador responded that few KP observers likely recognized that the visit was a bilateral mission, and pointed out that his remarks quoted in the Zimbabwean press had been attributed to him as the KP Chair. Emphasizing that Zimbabwe has posed a problem for the KP

since 2004, Esau explained that the Namibian government (GRN) has a unique ability to influence the GOZ that other KP members simply do not have. Israel, the next KP Chair, would have a more difficult time trying to find a solution since it lacked Namibia's special relationship with Zimbabwe, Diamond Commissioner Hamutenya remarked.

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An Urgent Response Was Needed  
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13. (C) Esau stated that, after the August 4 conference call with the Working Group on Monitoring (WGM), he felt compelled to try to push the GOZ to begin responding to the initial recommendations that emerged from the July Review Mission to Zimbabwe. He asserted that the upcoming Namibian national elections in November prompted him to travel to Zimbabwe without prior consultations. Esau, who is also a member of parliament for the ruling SWAPO party, noted that he would be busy campaigning starting the weekend of September 5.

14. (C) The Diamond Commissioner added that the WGM moves very slowly, often taking months to deliberate, but "alarming reports" from Zimbabwe forced the Chair to act quickly. Sources had sent the KP chair reports that the demilitarization of Marange had resulted in a huge influx of people to the area, prompting fears of a resumption of illicit diamond mining, explained Hamutenya. Furthermore, the Chair had received allegations that witnesses who had provided information to the July Review Mission team were suffering from intimidation. At least one case - the ransacking of a local chief's house - proved unfounded,

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according to Hamutenya.

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Misconstrued by the Press  
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15. (C) The Chair acknowledged that he had not briefed KP members prior to his trip to Zimbabwe, but stressed that the press had played a major role in his visit being misunderstood. He claimed that he was "shocked" by how Zimbabwe's Herald newspaper reported his statements regarding the KP's views and deliberations on Zimbabwe. Esau explained that his remarks to the press in Harare were "guided by the statements of the Working Group on Monitoring" and that he never suggested that Zimbabwe's suspension from the KP was off the table. Hamutenya noted that the KP Chair and his team were in Angola and were basically incommunicado when the story hit the internet, thereby delaying the KP Chair's response.

16. (C) Pointing to a document that he did not share, Esau indicated that he had a written statement nearly ready that would resolve any misperceptions surrounding his visit to Zimbabwe. Responding to the Ambassador's urging, Esau committed to circulate and coordinate the statement with WGM members prior to his posting it on the KP website. (Note: Shortly after the meeting, the KP Chair issued a statement clarifying his visit to Zimbabwe. The statement taken almost verbatim from text proposed and drafted by the Working Group on Monitoring has been posted on the KP website. End Note).

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Making Progress?  
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17. (C) As a result of his trip, Esau explained, the GOZ offered a timetable and action plan to respond to the Review Mission's recommendations to bring Zimbabwe into KP compliance. The Ambassador encouraged the Chair to share the plan with members of the WGM so they could evaluate it. Asked how the Chair would respond if the plan did not fully satisfy the WGM, Esau explained that it was just a starting

point, a first draft in which to begin negotiations.

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Plenary Date Set  
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¶18. (C) The KP Chair acknowledged that his team was behind in its planning for the KP plenary session, but revealed that it would take place November 2-6 in Swakopmund, with invitations to be sent in the coming days. Esau boasted that the organization of the meeting would be "very good" and hoped it would yield a solution to the Zimbabwe problem. Esau also indicated he would work to see Mozambique and other non-KP countries join the plenary.

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Regional Task Force  
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¶19. (C) The KP Chair also remarked that he had discussed the formation of a Regional Task Force with GOZ officials. The Review Mission included creation of a Regional Task Force as one of its recommendations in its July interim update report. He noted that the Task Force, to be comprised of senior officials from Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries, would provide administrative oversight of a compliance monitoring team that would be based in Marange.

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Comment  
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¶10. (C) Esau's trip to Zimbabwe was likely his attempt to try to reconcile two competing obligations, his responsibilities as the KP Chair, and the GRN's policy of non-interference (and historical support) for the GOZ. We expect Esau to try to position Zimbabwe in the most favorable position possible and try to resolve issues regarding suspension prior to the end of his tenure as Chair.

¶11. (C) Following numerous emails and letters from WGM members, as well as Ambassador Mathieu's demarche, Esau appears to have understood that his lack of coordination and

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consultation has raised serious concerns about his chairmanship amongst the KP membership. He also seems to understand that delivering a well executed plenary session may be an opportunity to redeem himself, but whether he can adequately focus on the plenary with Namibia's national elections following just three weeks later (November 27-28) remains to be seen. End Comment.  
MATHIEU